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THE
WAY OF LIFE

FAMILIARLY STATED

IN

LETTERS TO AN ANXIOUS INQUIRER.

BY

REV. DUNCAN McRUER,

MINISTER KNOX'S CHURCH, AYR.

UNITED CHURCH
TORONTO: ARCHIVES

ADAM, STEVENSON & CO.,

BOOKSELLERS & IMPORTERS

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TORONTO :
BELL, BARKER & CO., PRINTERS.
94 and 96 Yonge Street.

PREFACE.

These Letters, written for the benefit of an Anxious Inquirer to whom the Author was sincerely attached, are now published ; not because of their literary excellence ; nor because they are supposed to teach something different from what has been taught on the subjects of which they treat ; nor because they are regarded as presenting truth in a dress different from that in which it has already appeared—they lay claim to neither ; but with a view to the spiritual profiting of the people of his charge, and as a slight memorial of his ministry among them. It is the Author's prayer that the Great Head of the Church may bless them to promote His glory, and to advance His kingdom.

AYR MANSE, January, 1871.

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THE WAY OF LIFE

FAMILIARLY STATED.

FIRST LETTER.

John 14. 1.—“ *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.*”

Acts 16. 31.—“ *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.*”

1 John 3. 23.—“ *This is His Commandment, that ye should believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ.*”

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I propose in this letter to set before you the great object of faith, or that in which we must believe if we would be saved.

Now, lay it down as a first principle that the object of your faith is a *Person*, not a doctrine, not a creed, not an opinion, or a promise. I do not direct you to believe in this or that doctrine, creed, opinion, or promise, but I wish distinctly to direct you to a Person. These things may be the grounds of faith, they tell us what He is who is the object of our faith, but they are not the objects of faith. The blessings of salvation are not the objects of our faith, but He is the object of our faith who has purchased them by His obedience and death, and who now

bestows them upon us. The person who is the object of faith is spoken of in the Scriptures under such appellations as "The Son of God," "Our God," "Thy God," "The Christ the Son of the living God," "His Son Jesus Christ," and "The Lord Jesus Christ."

He is the object of our faith :—

1. In His Person. Christ is truly and properly God and man in one person. When His person is spoken of reference is made to Him, not as God or as man, but to Him in His whole person as God-man. He will continue to be God and man in one person for ever. The union of Divinity and Humanity in the one person of Christ is a leading article in our faith, and must be believed by all who expect salvation. Our faith does not take hold simply of His Godhead or simply of his manhood, but our faith is in Christ in His person—God-man. We can never apply to Christ without having a reference either directly or indirectly to His person. No part of our salvation can be accomplished by any mere creature. Divinity alone is equal to the task. No mere creature could offer an atonement sufficient to expiate human guilt. We obtain deliverance from sin, not so much by a sacrifice offered, as by the quality of the sacrifice that is offered.

No mere creature possesses the power adequate to quicken the dead soul, to overcome the stubbornness of the human will, to wash the soul from sin, to give power for every duty, and, finally, to cast down and destroy every foe. The number of

the redeemed is great, our circumstances are exceedingly diversified, every time with us is a time of need, and in no instance are we equal to our relief or supply. We need a Saviour who is Divine. We need a Saviour who is present with us continually, who is thoroughly acquainted with all that concerns us, and who is furnished with such stores as shall afford us continued and full supply.

But this involves a direct reference to His humanity. Christ is God; but, as God, he could not obey the law actively, nor could he suffer or die. The law must be obeyed in a life of obedience, and its curse must be removed by the sufferings and death of our substitute in our nature, if any member of our fallen race would at last reach salvation. God *must* be a just God. To meet this case we are told in the Scriptures that "God sent forth His Son made of a woman and made under the law," that "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," and that "He took not upon Him the nature of angels but the seed of Abraham." When He was on earth there were men who beheld His glory. Their eyes did look upon Him, and their hands did handle Him. He was made man to do and to die for us. He is God to give value to his obedience, his sufferings, and his death in our room and for our benefit and to overcome death. Were he only man, his atonement would be finite in value, and would be insufficient to meet the demands of law and justice preferred against us, but as God-man his divinity casts an infinite value into all that he has done as the surety of sinners, and proclaims him as

able to meet the most necessitous demands that are made upon all the guilty and polluted that apply to him through all the generations of men ; and still as having worldfulls of merit over and above.

This is He of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets did write ; He is the seed of the woman who was to bruise the head of the serpent—the seed of Abraham of whom all the families of the earth should be blessed—the child born of the tribe of Judah and family of David, and at the same time the equal of Jehováh whose goingsforth have been from old, from everlasting. He is “the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace.”

2.—In his offices. Christ is the object of faith in the offices he holds. This follows as a necessary consequence from what has been said of Him as an object of faith in his person. If we regard Christ as God-man, and as the God-man of whom Moses and the Prophets wrote, we must regard Him in all His offices as His person is invested with them. God the Father, according to covenant stipulation with His Son in the economy of grace, and according to the promise made to our Fathers, sent forth His Son in the fulness of time as the Messiah. He appointed Him, commissioned Him, and by the peculiar constitution of his person and the endowment of the Spirit qualified Him and accredited Him as the Redeemer of our fallen world. We are taught these truths even in the titles that are applied to our Redeemer. The word Christ as applied to Him who bears it is not strictly speaking a proper name. It is an official ti-

the corresponding to the Hebrew word Messiah and to the English word Anointed. Under the Old Testament the rite of Anointing seems to have been intended as a public intimation of a Divine appointment to the offices of Prophet, Priest and King. So when our Redeemer is called the Messiah or the "Christ," the title is equivalent to the Anointed One and indicates that He who bears it is God and man in one person, and is Divinely appointed, commissioned, qualified, and accredited to assume and to execute the three great offices of Prophet, Priest, and King. Faith rests upon His person as appointed and commissioned. It receives Him to the full extent of His appointment and commission. There is no separation between His person and His offices in his appointment and commission as the Messiah; nor are his offices separated from each other. An entire Christ is commissioned and appointed to save sinners, and faith should be the echo of that commission and appointment. On this Divine appointment much rests in our salvation. Without it Christ could be of no avail to our guilty and perishing world. The Scriptures speak of Him as the great Teacher in whom dwelleth no darkness at all, who is able to open the mind that is full of darkness and cause it to see light in His light, clearly—who can open the blind eye and cause those who sit in the darkness and shadow of death to see a great light and come forth and walk as children of the light and of the day; they speak of Him as the Great High Priest whose atonement reaches back to our apostacy in the first

transgressor, and goes down to the remotest age of our eventful history, washing away all the sins of all who look to Him, and preparing them for glory—they speak of Him as a King who can be foiled by no artifice, and can be overcome by no foe, who marches forth conquering and to conquer; and who rules in the heart of a blessed and willing people, but they are ever careful to remind us that He is of avail to our world, simply because of the express appointment and commission of the Father. "Him hath God the Father sealed." He received His appointment and commission to be the Saviour of sinners not from men, whom he represents and for whom he acts and who are benefitted by His mediation, nor did He assume the work of human salvation of his own choice, but he was expressly appointed to it by the Father, the first person of the Godhead—the fountain of all authority. "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world," and he had power to lay down his life and power to take it again because of the commandment he received of his Father. Christ points distinctly to his commission from the Father as he enters upon his last sufferings when he says, "As the Father gave me *commandment* so I do; arise let us go hence; and the testimony of the apostles may be summed up in the words he was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," "Whom God hath *set forth* to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." "The Lamb slain *from the foundation of the world.*"

Now, faith rests on Christ as its object as our

Divinely appointed and commissioned PRIEST. We mention his office of Priest first because of two things:—First, it lies at the foundation of his other offices. Christ would have no salvation to reveal as a Prophet, or to apply as a King, if he had not opened up the way as a Priest. Second, because of the position which this office holds in the economy of grace it is spoken of with peculiar solemnity. It alone is confirmed with an oath.

It is to this office we first turn when our heart is pinched and stung under a clear sight and true sense of our state and character before God. In this office we discover the grand remedy which the Gospel exhibits to us. How our case, however desperate, is fully met and our heart relieved. This is true of the sinner when for the first time he is brought to the Lord Jesus, and is also true in that life that is a complication of wonders, that lies between the period of his conversion and the hour of his admission to glory. The soul troubled on account of sin can find peace only by looking to Christ as a Priest, and Christ too in the very act of expiating sin by His atoning death. It is when faith takes hold of His person as rolling His garments in His own blood that it rises with life and power and rejoices as those rejoice who have found great spoil. Such is the experience of the people of God. Faith turns to and rests upon a suffering Saviour. It was so with Adam and his posterity for several ages. They looked to the promised Deliverer as having his heel bruised as well as bruising the head of the serpent. It was so with the old Testament Israel.

Adam saw the Promised Deliverer in a suffering condition. The House of Israel saw Him in their sacrifices in a suffering and dying posture. It is so in the New Testament times. An apostle says, "I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." The Scriptures are very full in their statements about Christ as a Priest. They represent Him as a public person who appeared before God in the name and on the behalf of the guilty, and who satisfied divine justice for them and reconciled them to God by the sacrifice of Himself and who on the ground of this sacrifice which He offered, makes continual and ever-prevailing intercession for them in heaven. We cannot too clearly see the necessity of an atonement, if any member of our fallen race should at last reach salvation. We are sinners and his law and justice must be satisfied before we can be saved. Here no doubt can be allowed. The demand for an atonement rests on high grounds. It rests on the perfections of God, on the nature of His moral government, and on the plain statements of the Scriptures. An atonement must be offered either in our own person or in the person of our substitute. If we attempt it in our own person it is vain. Our life to the utmost extent is forfeited, and satisfaction in our own person involves nothing less than all the woes of hell throughout eternity. From this point of view we are undone forever. But to meet our case Christ is brought before us as a Priest. We cannot too clearly see that He, the God-man, as a public person, assumed precisely the legal place and obligations of those in whose name he appeared before God,

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that he presented himself in their room and stead or for their benefit, to do two things—to render perfect obedience to the Divine law, and to endure the penalty which they had incurred in their representative under the covenant of works and in their own persons. In these two things the satisfaction consists which Christ rendered to God, to His law and to His justice. Thus He obeyed the law, and thus he died the just for the unjust. This atonement is of infinite value. It must be so because of the dignity of his person—He is God and Man. His divine nature gave to the obedience he rendered, the sufferings he endured, and the death he died in his human nature, an infinite value because of the relation in which he stood to us. He was our kinsman—made like unto his brethren, because he was free from all personal obligation to suffer. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Because He was at His own disposal. He is God and has a right to dispose of Himself according to his good pleasure. Because he willingly obeyed, suffered and died, and because in all he had the appointment of the Father.

We cannot therefore form too large an estimate of the value of this atonement. By it a full reconciliation for sinners of our guilty race is secured. Every obstacle, every barrier is absolutely removed to any and every returning sinner. A sound theology and a true Christianity will ever turn to a FULL ATONEMENT and a FREE SALVATION. On these two pillars, like the Jochim and Boaz of the ancient temple, the whole fabric will be built and upheld. All life and

light, all holiness and supplies of the Spirit descend from the person of the risen Redeemer; but God looks at the atonement when he communicates the Divine life, and man must look at that same atonement with similar views and feelings to those with which God regards it, as the ground of all his confidence, and as the source of all the daily supplies which are given him to lead him onward and upward to glory. His office of a Priest does not stop here. Christ as a Priest is now in Heaven, and in virtue of his sacrificial work he mediates in every possible way in which the welfare of those for whom He acts can be promoted. He appears in the presence of God for them, He presents the memorials of His atonement to God for them, He asks, He prays, He intercedes, He intimates His will that the purchased blessings of redemption be conferred upon them, and "Him the Father heareth always." His position in Heaven, His dispensing the blessings of His purchase, and the salvation of a numerous and blessed people, proclaim the Father as satisfied in and well-pleased with His work as a Priest. Here faith casts the weight of the soul and the burden of sin, and finds rest—is satisfied.

Faith views its object as a *Prophet*.

True faith rests upon the person of Christ as commissioned by God to be the Saviour of Sinners, and therefore regards him in every office distinctly. Now there is not a distinct commission for each office he holds. His commission as the Saviour of sinners or the Mediator between God and man covers all. Faith views its object as commissioned, and to the

extent of his commission. As faith is exercised for justification, Christ is regarded as a Priest; as it is exercised for understanding the will of God he is considered as a Prophet. As a prophet he is said to "reveal to us by his word and spirit the will of God for our salvation." In the Scripture the term Prophet is frequently used to indicate one who foretells future events. It is also used to denote one who is employed to reveal the will of God to man whatever that revelation may be. In this latter sense it is applied to Christ. As such a prophet he reveals the will of God to us *outwardly* by his word. During that period of time that lies between the announcement of the first promise in the curse pronounced upon the serpent and the incarnation of Christ, he, as the prophet of his church, at sundry times and in divers manners, made known the will of God to our world. In the fulness of time he appeared on our earth and tabernacled among men, and in his own person taught the will of God concerning salvation. After he was taken up into heaven he more fully revealed the will of God by the New Testament writers, by whom he completed the system of revelation. In this way he has given us a perspicuous, a full and authoritative revelation of the Divine will, and a rule of faith to which we must ever appeal as our standard of truth and guide in the path of duty. This revelation we must receive, not because it can stand our criticism, or may be in harmony with our judgment, but because it is the revelation of him who is commissioned to reveal the will of God. We dare not take from it, we dare not add to it. At the

present hour by the reading and preaching of this word, and by the dispensation of his appointed ordinances, Christ continues to make known the will of God for the salvation of men. He will continue to execute this part of his prophetic office in this way until he come again to judge the quick and the dead. He reveals to us the will of God by his Spirit. This he does *inwardly*. Without this inward revelation the word of God though sharper than a two-edged sword will not profit for our salvation. In our natural state as sinners we are blind and incapable of discerning the things of salvation in this true light. Our will and affections are utterly opposed to them, being engrossed with the honours, the profits, the pleasures and the sins of the world. Nothing but Divine power can overcome and remove these mighty obstacles that lie in the way of our salvation. To meet our case the Spirit comes. He adds no new matter to what we are taught in the word, but he takes of the things of Christ and discovers them in their reality, their glory, their adaptation to us, and their constraining power, and by the truth leads us through that change over which is written "old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new."

The need of Christ as a Priest is felt and always felt by the sinner who believes unto the saving of the soul; but it is not long before he feels his need of him as a prophet also. Some time may lie between the sinner's conversion and his admission to heaven. The comfortable views and feelings of the first period of his Christian life do not always abide with him.

Cloudy days and stormy nights overtake him on his heaven-ward journey. He feels that he greatly needs a skilful guide to direct in the right way, or to bring him back when he has strayed, that he needs instruction every day and every hour, that he needs spiritual discernment without which he can know nothing aright, and spiritual wisdom to understand the things that are given to him of God. These wants are all met in Christ as a prophet as he comes to teach by his Spirit.

Faith beholds its object as our *King*.

As faith views its object as commissioned, and to the *extent* of his commission, it beholds him not only as a Priest and Prophet, but as King also. He is largely spoken of as a King in the Scriptures. God the Father, as representing the God-head in the economy of grace, said "yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Christ speaking of the same truth said "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." The sacred penmen ascribe royal names and titles to him, such as "Ruler in Israel," "Judge," "Leader and Commander," "the Captain of Salvation," "Prince of Peace," "King of Kings and Lord of Lords," and they assign to him the insignia of royalty as a sceptre and a throne.

Faith views him as that King who subdues sinners to himself. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power." "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are at peace, but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."

Luke 11: 21—22. Here, Christ teaches that the souls are by nature the palace of Satan—~~but~~ he is in secure, through guarded possession of them—that there is a willing subjection to him—and that when he, Christ, “the stronger than the strong man,” takes the case in hand, this ruler of the darkness of this world must bow before him and quit his palace. Whence this power of Satan, and whence this power of Christ? Our sins cast us into the hands of our enemy and gave him power over us; and the power of Christ to grapple with and overcome this strong man flows from his sacrificial work as Priest—it flows from the cross. He by that sacrifice did bear away our sin, and in virtue of it He now sits on a throne and sends forth His Holy Spirit into the souls of men, by whom he comes to this inhabited palace for an encounter with the strong man that he may cast him out, and rear a temple in which he may dwell. ~~During~~ ⁱⁿ the encounter how intensely engaged is the strong man! To what refuges does the sinner in his madness under the power of Satan flee to keep from an immediate settlement of the question between him and Christ. Under the direction of the strong man he will trust to the general mercy of God. Drive him from this and he will take refuge in the thought that there are many worse than he and that if he perish they will go down to heavier woe. Drive him from this, also, and he will take refuge in his deep convictions of sin, his mortification of sin and his sighing after holiness. Drive him from this and he will flee to the progress he has made, and to the hope that all

will at last be right. Drive him from this and he will take refuge in the idea that he has something to do in order to his salvation, something that will enable Christ to save him, or something that will qualify him for being saved by Christ. Drive him from this, also, and he will take refuge in the thought that there is no urgent haste, that there is time enough yet. Drive him from this and, in deep anguish, he will take refuge in the belief that he is too great a sinner to hope for mercy, and that his day of grace is gone forever—one piece of the strong man's armour after another is taken from him and at last the sinner is led to turn his eye away from doing to what is *already done*, and he falls into the arms of Christ. The strong man quits his palace and the stronger than he takes possession as the rightful owner, no more to go out from it forever. He gives everlasting salvation to the soul, and takes all the glory to himself. He has begotten a soul unto himself by the word of God; which liveth and abideth forever. It is the work of Christ to open the sinner's eyes, and to turn him from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. This He accomplishes under a dispensation of his own word. Thus we are told that when the word was preached at Philippi, "The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, so that she attended to things which were spoken by Paul."

Again Faith beholds Christ as a King who *rules* us.

"The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will save us."

When Christ as the Lawgiver comes to his people, how tenderly does he speak to them! He says to each of them, "my son, bind them continually upon thy heart, tie them about thy neck. When thou goest it shall lead; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou wakest, it shall talk with thee." This law Christ gives them, not that they may be justified by it, for they are already justified by the righteousness of Christ being imputed to them and by their reception of that righteousness by faith, nor is it given them for their condemnation by it, for being in Christ they are free from condemnation; but it is given them as a rule of life and is binding on them because of the natural relation in which they stand to him who gives it—he being their Creator and they being the work of his hands; and because of the relation which they bear to him in grace—he being their Redeemer, and they being the subjects of his redemption by purchase and by power. The authority of Christ is thus sweetened by his love to them and their love to him, and they are constrained to walk with him in all the ways of new obedience. Each of them says, "O how love I thy law, it is my study all the day." He has put his fear in their heart, so that they may not depart from him and they no longer fashion themselves according to the former lusts in their ignorance, but as he who has called them is holy, so they study to be holy in all manner of conversation. Christ as King, erects his throne in the heart of a willing people, and the fruits of his reign are "righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." He gives them

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a will and power to obey his laws, and as the captain of their salvation he directs, inspires and encourages them in every conflict with every spiritual foe, until he has brought forth judgment to victory.

Christ rules his people, also, by correcting them when they stray from him. Faith sees in all our troubles Christ dealing with us on account of sin. Believers sin—often sin grievously. Christ deals with them on account of their sin. Is the conscience troubled under a sense of sin, so that it burns with a smouldering glare, while there is no clear apprehension of the grounds on which it may find acceptance before God? It is fearful to wander in this valley of horrible distress, where no ray of divine favour lights the gloom. The heart, bleeding, crushed and weary, seeks for rest. With great self-loathing the cry is heard, my own hand wrought this work, mine—mine. If I held in my hand this poor broken heart of mine and offered it a living, burning sacrifice on the altar of my remorse, it were fruitless—fruitless all to atone for my unnatural, unreasonable and terribly aggravated sin. Faith says these are arrows from the quiver of Christ, because of sin he has broken and he must heal. Is the soul troubled because of losses sustained in our worldly estate, or the loss of those who have been the light of our eyes and the joy of our hearts, or the sickness and pain which we endure? Faith sees Christ in all and leads the believer with the sacred poet to sing.

“Though trouble springs not from the dust;
 Nor sorrow from the ground;
 Yet ills on ills, by Heaven’s decree,
 In man’s estate are found.”

Is the soul in distress because of the cause of Christ? Faith sees Christ in the state of His own church. Because of his sin he removes the candlestick. Because of sin, in displeasure he gives Jacob to the spoil and Israel to the robbers. Faith sees in all this, Christ correcting on account of sin and turns to Him for relief. It finds support and relief in Him and only in Him.

Faith beholds Christ as a King in Zion, defending his people against all inward and outward foes, and as restraining and conquering all His and our enemies. It sees Him as reigning until he has put all his enemies under His footstool. David shall *sing* among the nations, and David's Lord "shall endure for ever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun."

Thus I have endeavoured to present to you, briefly and clearly, the great object of Faith. The scriptural doctrine concerning the work of Christ as Mediator, which He wrought for the salvation of sinners, may be classed under the three offices which He executes—those of a Prophet, a Priest, and a King. The study of Christ as He executes these offices for the salvation of men, is the highest and the best that can engage the attention of man. The theme may be despised and rejected by ungodly men, but it is ever fruitful and pleasant to those who believe. No heart can conceive, no language can express the beauty or the worth of Him, who is ever presented to us in the Gospel as the object of our faith. We can not arrive at a perfect knowledge of His excellency and glory, yet it is our duty and our privilege to

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study all things pertaining to Him with the greatest application of mind. Our happiness depends on Him, and we may under the teaching of the good Spirit of truth so far understand him as to influence our heart with a tender, supreme and undying love to him. The full discovery which we in time desire and seek after shall be obtained in eternity, by the presence and light of our Redeemer.

In my next letter I propose to indicate the manner in which Christ is exhibited in the Gospel, as a ground of Faith to sinners of our guilty race.

May Divine blessings rest with you.

I am, my Very Dear Friend,

Yours truly.♥

SECOND LETTER.

Isaiah 42. 6.—“*I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles.*”

John 3. 16.—“*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*”

John 6. 32.—“*My Father giveth you the true bread from Heaven.*”

I John 5. 11.—“*And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.*”

MY DEAR FRIEND,

According to promise, at the close of my former letter, I will now indicate the manner in which Christ is exhibited in the Gospel to sinners that they may believe on Him to salvation. The vast importance of the subject of which I treat requires that it be well understood. Many things tend to lead us astray when we study it. We are very apt to be imposed upon by the deceitfulness of our own hearts. Through self-love or self-righteousness, or a total want of all spiritual life and light, we are reluctant to acknowledge that we have sunk by sin into such terrible depths of guilt and pollution as those in which we by nature lie, and are not prepared to acquiesce in that plan of

salvation that completely overturns all human glorying and cuts off all occasion of boasting in our own righteousness. Now, there is nothing in all the world so humbling to the sinner as the Gospel exhibition of Christ. Let me briefly state it. The Gospel exhibition of Christ proceeds upon two things that should be clearly seen and deeply felt as we listen to the offers of the Gospel. It is of the greatest importance that the two things to which I refer should find a firm lodgment in our mind and in our heart. The Gospel exhibition of Christ proceeds upon the supposition that Christ is the *only* Saviour of sinners, and that He is an *all-sufficient* Saviour of sinners. As these two things are of great importance, let me dwell on them for a little. We are told that Christ is the *only* Saviour of sinners when we are taught that He is the *only appointed* Saviour. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "He was called of God, as was Aaron." "Behold mine *Elect*, in whom my soul delighteth." The Scriptures are very clear in their teaching that He who would save sinners must receive his commission from the Father, the first person of the Godhead, who acts for the Trinity in redemption. They are also very clear in declaring that the Father, acting on the part of the Trinity, authorized, commissioned, and legally qualified and accredited Christ as the Saviour of sinners, and Him alone. There is but *one Mediator* between

God and man, the man Christ Jesus. We are told that Christ is the only Saviour of sinners when we are taught that He is the *only qualified* Saviour. In His person He is qualified for the work of saving sinners. He is truly God, and truly and properly man in one person. He is qualified in His character. His human nature is endowed with all the graces and excellencies of humanity by the Holy Spirit, who was given Him without measure. He is qualified to save sinners by what He learned in the school of experience when He tabernacled among men. He alone is qualified to deal with God for man, and with man for God. We are taught this truth when we are taught that Christ is the *only accredited* and *accepted* Saviour of sinners. "Him hath God the Father sealed." God, the Father, has expressly borne testimony to the Son by signs and wonders, by His resurrection from the dead, by His ascension to heaven, and by His session there, by the descent of the Holy Spirit, by the conversion of sinners, and by the glorification of His people.

We must stand in this Saviour *absolutely alone*, or we are for ever undone. Any other method of salvation is no better than a refuge of lies, which God in His wrath will utterly sweep away. Allow me to entreat you not to be deceived by a deceitful heart or by the delusions of Satan upon this point, and give heed, before it be too late, to the following admonition of the Spirit: "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass about yourselves with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and of the sparks that ye have kindled. This

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The Gospel exhibition of Christ proceeds upon the supposition that Christ is the *all-sufficient* Saviour of sinners.

The redemption of countless millions of our guilty race is an undertaking in the contemplation of which all thought is lost and all expression is swallowed up. It is a vast undertaking. Large though the undertaking is, Christ is equal to it. This is the constant testimony of the Scripture concerning Him—"That I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." "He is mighty to save." "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." "He is the Saviour of sinners." "He came to seek and to save that which was lost." "Jehovah our Righteousness." "Jehovah our Peace." "Jehovah our Healer." "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

An apostle draws up an inventory of the unsearchable riches of Christ which he arranges under four particulars, when he tells the Corinthian converts that they were "in Christ Jesus who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." These blessings are adapted to the sinfulness and wretchedness of our race. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." To meet our case Christ is of "God

made unto us *wisdom*." All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in him." He gives us a revelation of the Divine will regarding our salvation, he opens our hearts to understand the Scriptures, and conducts us safely in the right way to everlasting glory. We are guilty before God. We can not, we dare not say we are not guilty before God. We have sinned against every claim which God has upon us for the entire surrender of our all to him. We can offer no excuse for our sin, and can make no atonement to satisfy divine justice or the requirements of the divine law. Because of our guilt we are in a state of condemnation to death, and can urge no plea in arrest of the sentence recorded against us. To meet our case Christ is "of God made unto us *righteousness*." He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Our guilt was imputed to him, and he did bear our sins in his own body on the tree, and now his righteousness is imputed to us, counted as ours in the judgment of God. A real transference is made, our sins were imputed to him, and his righteousness is really imputed to us, in which we have a plea as prevalent for our justification and admission to glory as if we had stood in our innocence in our federal head under the covenant of works. In this way we come to have a judicial title to heaven and all its glory.

We are polluted by sin and have no moral fitness for the employment, the joys and the society of heaven. The whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint. In our character as well as in our state,

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we are like our father the devil. We can not wash away this pollution. But it must be removed, and we must appear without spot or wrinkle or any such thing in judgment, if we would enter the heavenly world. "Without holiness no man can see the Lord." No man can enter heaven, no man expects to enter heaven while polluted by sin. To meet our case Christ is "of God made unto us *sanctification*." He comes to us by his Spirit and creates us anew. He enables us to think right, to feel right, and to act right about all things pertaining to our salvation. He makes us "Holiness to the Lord." We are safe, eternally safe in salvation if when we stand in judgment we have a judicial title to heaven, on the grounds of Christ's righteousness, and a moral fitness for heaven by the application to us by the Spirit of the redemption purchased by Christ. On the other hand we are undone, eternally undone if when we appear before the judgment seat of Christ we are found to have no judicial title to heaven, and no moral fitness for heaven. He who can bring us into possession of these two unspeakable blessings I submit may well be denominated an all-sufficient Saviour, the very Saviour which we poor sinners need. Perhaps believers err in looking so much, as they are apt to do, to the benefits that accompany or flow from these blessings rather than to the blessings themselves. When we get the blessings of a title to heaven and a moral fitness for heaven we may rest assured that all the benefits of Christ's purchase will grow out of them to us, and at last rest upon us in actual possession. As a matter of fact, however, you may not see

the full force of the position I assume, and may think that Christ must meet the case of the sinner more fully ~~to~~ to entitle him to the appellation of an all-sufficient Saviour. To meet your state of mind the apostle declares that Christ is of God made unto us not only wisdom to meet our ignorance, righteousness to meet our guilt, sanctification to meet our pollution, but also *redemption to meet every other act, matter, and thing* about salvation in time and eternity. There is with him a plenteous redemption that he may be sought unto.

He is an all-sufficient Saviour. Many sinners of our race from the time of the first transgression to the present hour have tasted of His goodness, have felt His power, and have been supported and supplied out of His bounty; and still He has world-fuls of grace and mercy over and above. Many at the present hour in the Church visible are living on Him, and ever out of His fulness receiving a supply for all their wants. Many shall in every future age until the last hour of our eventful history draw upon Him for all they need. Innumerable millions of redeemed from among men shall be sustained and supplied by Him as their Redeemer in glory throughout eternity. The period will come when the redeemed from among men shall stand in the Heavenly world, after incalculable millions of ages shall have rolled away since the time they saw the great white throne erected, and witnessed and acted in the transactions of the general judgment. At such a period they will still look to the same Redeemer and draw out of the same fulness, and see that He who

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with Him in glory, and that He has still worldfuls
of sufficiency to spare—that there is no diminution
of his “unsearchable riches.” The natural sun
does not possess less light because it lights up our
earth and the stars. The Sun of Righteousness
does not possess less light because He lights heaven
and earth, and will go on through eternal ages to
light up the heavenly world.

The Gospel, as distinguished from the law, pre-
supposes, as I have already intimated, that Christ is
as I have described him to be—the *only* and the *all-*
sufficient Saviour. The sinner is thus called upon
to look away from himself to Christ—to look not
inward but *outward*. Here the offence of the Cross
appears. We are not prepared to look away from
our repentance, our affections, our faith, our prayers,
our good works to our fellow-men, and our good
purposes respecting our future life, and take Christ
alone for our salvation. We are quite ready to take
Christ for salvation if we were allowed to join some-
thing that is within us to Christ who is without us.
But we are met on the very threshold of religion and
told that Christ allows of no composition, and that
even to seek to unite Him and anything in us or any
work that we have performed is to reject Him and
His salvation. He alone builds the temple, and He
alone will bear the glory.

The Gospel, as distinguished from the law,
contains no threatenings, no commands, but is made
up of invitations, of promises, of offers regarding

Christ and His salvation. Let me now particularly state the truth regarding the exhibition of Christ in the Gospel in its limited sense.

The Gospel contains a *grant* of Christ, and of a full salvation in Him to all who hear it. This grant of Christ has been called "a gift," "a deed of gift," and "a deed of gift and grant." The meaning is, first, that God holds out in offer or tender His Son and eternal life in Him to every sinner, *as* a sinner who hears the Gospel; and, second, that this grant, or offer, or tender of Christ affords a warrant to all to receive Him. This gift, or offer, or tender on the part of God of His Son and eternal life in Him to sinners of mankind indefinitely, is, in itself, *complete*. I cannot insist on this point too strongly. The gift is complete in itself, whether the sinners to whom it is made accept it, or decline to accept it, or with indignation reject it. The acceptance of a gift does not belong to the act of giving, though it is necessary to its actual possession. The act of giving may be complete, but the act of accepting may be wanting. We may give or tender to the poor our alms, our gift or tender may not be accepted, but the non-acceptance of the gift or tender does not prove that it was not properly made. There is a great difference between the act of God in giving and the act of the sinner in receiving. The former is absolutely perfect without the latter.

I wish to be clearly understood, for, on the great truth I now teach, ~~rests~~ the warrant of our faith. It would be an act of the highest presumption in the fallen angels to even attempt to embrace Christ as a

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Saviour. But it is no presumption in any sinner ~~in~~ time, whatever may have been his past history, not only to attempt to embrace Christ as a Saviour, but actually to receive Him and lay claim to all the benefits of His mediation and death. These things are true, because Christ is given to apostate man but is not given to fallen angels. The pauper to whom we have given or tendered our alms has a right to receive them *as* given or tendered, but were he to take the same gift on any other ground he might be charged with theft or robbery. Our gift or tender gave him a right to that which we gave or tendered—a right to appropriate to himself, and to use for his own purposes, our alms; but only on the understanding that he accept them *as* offered or given. It is so here. God gives, or offers, or tenders His Son and eternal life in Him to sinners of mankind indefinitely. The gift or offer conveys in it a right to the sinners to whom it is made, to accept of the offer made and enjoy it in all its fullness and glory. In this lies our right or warrant to believe on Christ. Our warrant to believe on Christ rests here *alone*. On this we must, as sinners, take our stand, if we would reach salvation we must "receive and rest on Christ alone for salvation, *as* He is offered to us in the Gospel."

So that we may understand this gift of Christ, and in Him, eternal life to all who hear the Gospel, the Spirit has largely spoken of it in the Scriptures. He labours to keep before our mind three parties—the Giver, the Gift, and the Receiver. The Giver is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the

Gift is His only begotten and well-beloved Son, and eternal life in Him ; and the Receiver is the poor, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked sinner. I do not consider it necessary to find a warrant for God to *justify* Him in making this gift of Christ, and eternal life in Him, to sinners of mankind at large, and sinners of all kinds, *as* sinners. It is no doubt the best and wisest means that could be employed to accomplish the object He really intends to effect, or He would not make it. Nor do I found my warrant for proclaiming this gift to you, to all men, without exception or distinction, with the assurance that whoever accepts the gift shall receive everything necessary for his eternal welfare, on any other ground than the instructions which God has given us by precept and example, to guide us in this matter. His revealed will is the only rule, and ought to be held sufficient in all questions of duty. Now see how fully he has taught on this point in the Scriptures of truth.

This gift of Christ, with all-saving blessings in Him, God teaches us by the Spirit in His Word, specially in three forms—*e.g.*:

1. In the most *formal* manner.

It is expressed in Isaiah xlii. 6-7. "I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will help thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people ; for a light of the Gentiles ; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison ; and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." In this passage the Father speaks unto the Son, and declares, in a formal manner, that

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He will give Him as a Redeemer to sinners of mankind indefinitely. "I will *give* thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles," or nations. We know that this Old Testament expression—"Gentiles" or nations—denotes sinners of mankind beyond the house of Israel; and the "people" spoken of denotes those who enjoyed the privileges of the Old Testament Church. He is a "light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel." Christ is given to both Jews and Gentiles. He is given to all flesh. But what is the state and character of those to whom He is given as Redeemer? The Father is very formal in His statements when speaking to the Son regarding the state and character of those to whom He will give Him. He tells the Son that those to whom He will give Him are condemned, for they are "prisoners," and are ignorance itself, for they are "blind," and are in love with their desperate condition, for they "*sit* in darkness." Such is the state and character of all men. But God gives His Son to them while they are prisoners, and blind, and sitting in darkness. Not only this: God gives to them His Son *as* prisoners, *as* blind, and *as* sitting in darkness. The Gospel grant of Christ brings the sinner down to his true position, and cuts off every fancied excellency and every fancied ground of self-glorying. It is also expressed in Isaiah xlix. 6, "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also *give* thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth."

Here it is obvious that the Father gives the Son to both Jew and Gentile; and that the gift of Him to the Jew is but a light thing in comparison of the gift of Him to the Gentiles, for the time shall come when He shall be, not only the Redeemer given to the Gentiles, but received by them unto the end of the earth.

It is also expressed in John iii. 16, "God so loved the world, that He *gave* His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." The giving of the Son on the part of the Father, here spoken of, is the giving, granting, or offering of Christ to sinners of mankind without exception and distinction, as the warrant upon which the sinner is to proceed in believing. It is not such a giving as puts them in possession of the gift. The possession of the gift is peculiar only to those who actually believe. This giving of the Son is a giving that comes before faith, as is evident from the passage itself. "He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The context establishes this view. The brazen serpent was given, and lifted as a common good to all the stung Israelites, that whosoever, in all the camp, being stung by the fiery serpents, looked to it might be healed. So Christ is given to a lost world and so must He be exhibited, lifted up "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

It is also expressed in John 6, 32, "My Father giveth you the true bread from Heaven." Our Lord addressed this language to a promiscuous

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multitude. Many of them murmured against Christ, were offended at Him and did not believe in Him. Their true nature and real sentiments regarding Christ came out in the enquiry, "what sign showest Thou then, that we may see and believe in Thee?" To such a multitude Christ turns and in effect says, "My Father giveth you—you who are mine enemies, and who do not believe on Me, My Father giveth you the true bread from Heaven." How does the Father give ungodly, unbelieving men, this true bread from Heaven? To teach us the true answer to this enquiry, Christ compares Himself to the manna which fell around the tents of Israel in the wilderness. "Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from Heaven to eat." The falling of the manna around the camp is the way God gave them bread in the wilderness. Many Israelites might murmur against God, and desire flesh to eat, and neglect to gather the fallen manna, or indignantly trample it, but their conduct did not destroy the fact that it was given them and lay around their tents. So, wherever the Gospel is preached throughout the visible Israel of God, this true bread from Heaven falls. Man may neglect this salvation, or they may trample upon the blood of the covenant by which the people of God are sanctified, and consider it an unclean thing, but no action of theirs can destroy the fact that this bread is given them by God for their acceptance.

These are a few specimens of the way in which the Scriptures present the grant of Christ in a formal manner, by the Father, to our fallen world. To this

grant of Christ, we as sinners, must turn, and on it proceed as we receive him, if we would at last reach salvation. It is not such a grant as puts sinners in possession of him, but it is such a gift of the only-begotten Son of God, that each sinner who hears it has a right to take it to himself in particular, otherwise he makes God a liar. It is such a giving that every hearer of the Gospel has a right to say Christ and salvation are mine, not by way of actual interest or possession, but by a full right to receive and enjoy them as they are given. It is not such a giving as enables any sinner to say "Christ died for me," as that indicates a knowledge of the secret purposes of God, but it is such a giving as entitles sinners without distinction and exception, who hear of this grant, to apply it particularly, so that each one has a right to say, "Christ is dead for me,"—that is, He is given in the Gospel as crucified and slain for my benefit—for me to believe on for salvation—for me to look to as the wounded Israelite looked for healing to the brazen serpent. All mine in gift to receive and enjoy.

2.—In promises.

Beware lest you confound the exhibition of salvation in the promises which encourages sinners to come to the exercise of faith, and gives a warrant for their faith with the fulfilment of the promise to faith. In the promises of the Gospel, salvation is exhibited to all men indefinitely, but the promises do not imply that God is pledged to bestow salvation on every one who hears them. They are given to encourage faith, and be a warrant for faith, and to teach that God is

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ready* to accept and save *any* sinner who receives and rests on Christ as held up in the promises or tenders of the Gospel. The sum of those promises is often expressed in the words "I will be your God." The case of each sinner, however, is peculiar, and to meet individual cases the great promise of life is presented in many aspects, so that no man can say that his condition and character are so singular that he has no promise left him of entering into God's rest. Take a few promises as a specimen of what I mean. Is it a feature of your case that you are burdened with a load of guilt, having sinned against those claims which God has upon you, arising out of His infinite excellency, and also against all those obligations under which you lie to Him, arising out of the relations in which you stand to Him, and are you under your load of sin ready to sink down to the lowest hell? Then the promise is made to you, you have a right to lay hold upon it and live. "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own namesake; and will not remember thy sins." Is pollution a feature of your case so that you thus complain, "My whole head is sick and my whole heart is faint, from the sole of my foot to my head there is no soundness in me—nothing but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores, my heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked—my throat is an open sepulchre, my tongue is full of deceit, the poison of asps is under my lips—my mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, destruction and misery are in all my ways, I am not only in state but in character like my Father the Devil

whose works I have done!" Then to you is the promise made; you have a right to take it to yourself and live. "I will sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you." Is it a feature of your case that you feel your heart hard as adamant and your neck unbending as the iron sinew; that you cannot feel your state and character are as they are described in the Scriptures to be, and that you cannot feel your sin and mourn over it? Then to you is the promise made; you have a right to appropriate it to yourself and live. "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh." Is unbelief a feature of your case, are you broken down under a sense of your inability to remove your blindness, to oppose the enmity, carnality and legal tendencies of your nature, and to lay hold on the promises as addressed to you? To you is the promise made, you have a right to apply it to yourself and live, "In His name shall the Gentiles trust." Such are some of the promises that are made in the Gospel to excite faith and to give a warrant to faith. All these promises are free and unconditional. There is nothing to be done on the part of the sinner to which salvation is promised as the reward. Sometimes conditional promises are spoken of when the order, or the connection, or the succession, or the dependence of one part of salvation on another is taught; but the expression conditional promises is not allowable when it is employed to teach that something is to be done

to which salvation is promised as the reward. The surety-righteousness of Christ is the only condition of all the promises. Salvation is the reward of that righteousness, and of it *alone*. The promises are all made on the ground of that righteousness, and teach that all doing is done, and that the way to life is by faith taking hold of Him who is held up in the promise as addressed to those who are destitute of every good qualification. Here God promises acceptance, pardon, salvation—but all in Christ. As our King he issues a solemn proclamation and promise of pardon in Christ to every one of his apostate, rebellious subjects.

As our Father, he promises a rich legacy in Christ to every one of His apostate children. These promises are prior to faith. He promises pardon in Christ that we may accept it. He promises us a rich legacy in Christ that we may claim it. He promises us salvation in Christ that we may lay hold upon it. We sinners had no right to those blessings originally. Our right lies in the promise. It comes from *without* us. We must take them as they are promised. Seeing the promise is made to you, to me, to all who hear the Gospel—a promise of entering into God's rest, may I not say with the apostle, "Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

I have already made the remark and now must repeat it, that there is nothing in all the world so humbling to the sinner as the Gospel exhibition of Christ. The Gospel strips the sinner of every good qualification and casts down every lofty imagination.

It presents Christ as the gift of the Father to sinners as sinners, but a gift that must be received by the greatest sinner and also by the least in the same way, "without money and without price"; each must take Him as the Father's gift—claim Him on that ground, and on that *alone*. If we do not understand the exhibition of Christ in the formal statements of the Father as he proclaims Him as His gift to a perishing world, another line is given us. The Father presents His Son as His gift to our guilty race under the form of promises. As he does so the same humbling truths immediately appear. The sinner appears poor, wretched, miserable, blind and naked—having no right in himself to anything in the universe of God but sin and hell. He comes while in this state to have a right to Christ, but it comes from *without* him. It comes in the promise. Viewed from this point he has a right to appropriate Christ to himself, but only because of the promise. Each must take Him *as* promised.

If we can not see Christ as the gift of the Father from either of the two points I have already illustrated, so that we may be led to faith or left without excuse, He is exhibited to us in another form. We have given us line upon line on this subject. He is presented to us as the gift of the Father:

3.—In the offer and invitations of the Gospel.

Are the offers and invitations of the Gospel not exclusively addressed to those who possess certain pre-requisites, as faith, love, and repentance, that render them suitable objects of mercy or qualify them for being saved by Christ? No, certainly not.

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If the offers and invitations of the Gospel required any qualification, in those to whom they come, they would not answer our condition as sinners and therefore would be of no avail to us—we would all perish for ever. We are guilty and condemned sinners, and if the Gospel does not offer us and promise us pardon while we are guilty and condemned, and as guilty and condemned, it does not meet our condition. We are enemies to God and children of wrath, and the Gospel, to answer our condition, must offer us reconciliation and friendship while we are enemies and as enemies; and adoption into the family of God as heirs of wrath and while we are heirs of wrath. The Gospel offers riches to the poor, raiment to the naked, eye-salve for the restoration of sight to the blind; it offers these blessings to sinners as poor, as naked, and as blind; and while they are poor, naked, and blind. The hungry, the thirsty, the weary and the heavy laden are invited to come to Christ. But they are not invited because the state of mind indicated by these representations entitles the possessor to lay claim to Christ, or to indicate that this state of mind must be sought after or possessed before we can have a right to accept of Christ, but that sinners may see the rich, the suitable, and the varied supplies that are found in Christ.

The evil against which I warn you assumes many a subtle form and secures the ruin of many souls. Perhaps one of its most dangerous forms is where attention of duties is required before the sinner comes to a settlement of the matter between himself and Christ. Duties in this form are attended to, it may

be, in the hope that they may be so many motives to lead God to give the sinner a saving interest in Christ, or so many motives to lead Christ to give the sinner a saving interest in himself, or that they may bring forth faith, or that they may, in some form or other, qualify the soul for being saved by Christ. Or perhaps the most dangerous form is where what is sometimes called a "Law-work" is required before we come to a resting on Christ. A Law-work fills the soul with great terror and blasphemous thoughts of God. It hardens the heart and casts the sinner into a state that is utterly opposed to the offers and invitations of the Gospel. It takes its rise in ignorance of and unbelief in the free and full-salvation that is in Christ. It may end in despair, or in a rejection of even the name of religion, or in a censorious or self-righteous spirit. How very different is such a way of coming to Christ from that way that is stated in the Gospel and well-expressed in our admirable subordinate standards. The Spirit comes to convince us of our sin and misery, and to enlighten our minds in the knowledge of Christ. The discovery of the misery is accompanied with a revelation of the remedy, the sinner joyfully receives the knowledge of both. Any Law-work, apart from the discovery of the free, full, and immediate salvation that is in Christ, instead of being the struggles of the new birth or any qualification to come to Christ, is rather the agony of the second death.

We must be done with works and duties and qualifications to give us a claim to Christ, however specious or fair they appear. All our feelings and

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actions, or any feeling or action about ourselves or about Christ, never can give us a title to him or to the offers and invitations of the Gospel. Our right, our title to accept Christ comes not from *within* us, but from *without* us. In the gift of Christ by the Father, in the offers and invitations of the Gospel, we have a title or warrant to believe on Christ. It is the only warrant given us. It is the only one we need. It is perfect in itself, and is independent of any work within us or by us. Any other way of coming to Christ is a delusion, a snare, a lie, the end of which inevitably is Hell with all its woe.

All who hear the Gospel have an offer of Christ and eternal life in Him made them, and are encouraged to accept the offer and live. The case of every sinner, whatever its features may be, is met by an offer or invitation in the Gospel, so that each one is without excuse. Take a few offers and invitations as a specimen of what I mean. Is your heart bleeding, crushed and weary under a sense of guilt—of unpardoned sin, and do you labour as in the very fire to come to freedom? Then you are invited to look to Christ and live. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Are you conscious that your case is desperate—that you have greedily pursued the courses of sin—that you have corrupted many an associate with your iniquity—that you have lived as if it were your great design and business to provoke God to anger—that you have acted thus in defiance of every means employed for your amendment—that you are bad beyond correction—an incorrigible sinner? Then you are

invited to come and live. "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Are you ignorant, and easy, and credulous—are you soon deceived by Satan and the world—are you in love with your condition and unwilling to rise out of it or be made wise—are you a scoffer at all religion, and a contemner of the word and ordinances of God—are you a wilful and wicked fool? Then you are invited to turn and live. "How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you; I will make known my words unto you." Are you, after mature deliberation, willing to be saved from Hell for Heaven? Then you are invited to take it and live. "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." "If any man thirst let him come unto Me." We often hear, through the public press, of fountains whose waters possess medicinal qualities. Suppose the proprietor of a fountain whose waters possess such medicinal qualities as would remove the most obstinate diseases, having heard of a family suffering under a malady that baffled the skill of all medical practitioners to overcome it, sent a messenger to that family with an invitation under his own hand and seal, saying, that whosoever will may come and drink of the healing waters of his fountain till satisfied, and it shall cost him nothing. Would not each member of that family, if he believed the proprietor to be an honest and a sincere

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man, justly consider the waters as his own for immediate use in virtue of the invitation, specially when he remembered that no conditions were either proposed or required? The family of man suffers under a disease that no human skill can match, and no human power can remove. Another family suffers under the same disease. God, in great love, mercy, and grace, has opened up a fountain of healing water, for the family of man, but has passed the family of angels by. To our family he has sent messengers with an invitation under his own hand and seal, saying, "Whosoever will may come and take of the water of life freely." If we look upon God as honest and sincere, why does not each member of our family consider the provision as his own for immediate use, in virtue of the invitation, no previous terms being proposed or required? In the case of the proprietor of the fountain of healing waters, he is esteemed to be honest and sincere on the ground of his invitation; the diseased take their position, go and are healed. In the case of the Gospel provision, a few regard God as honest and sincere on the ground of his invitation; they take their position, go and are saved for time and eternity. Many regard him as neither honest nor sincere, and will not come to him that they may have life—they charge him with falsehood—they declare him a liar. Their end is death. Let me draw this letter to a close by calling upon you to lay it down as a first principle, that the sinner's right to Christ arises from nothing in him—from no operation of the Spirit in his conviction, in leading him to desire Christ, or esteem him or his ordinances or his

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salvation, or even from faith in him, but from the free grant of Christ by the Father, made to sinners of mankind indefinitely—and that as sinners we must rest upon Christ in the Gospel grant as our justifying righteousness,—and on the same ground rest upon him for that purity without which no man shall see the Lord,—and so take him as our full and everlasting portion. This grant of Christ and eternal life in Him, is made to sinners of mankind—it is made, it is written, it is sworn to, it is sealed, it is made over to us by the Father.

In my next letter I propose to consider the response we should give to this exhibition of Christ in the Gospel.

May the Gift of the Father be with you.

I am, my dear Friend,

Yours truly.

THIRD LETTER.

John 1. 12.—“ *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*”

John 3. 14-15.—“ *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up : that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*”

John 6. 47.—“ *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*”

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

I now proceed to indicate the response we should give to the exhibition of Christ in the Gospel.

We cannot, if we would, live and die as the brutes that perish. We cannot keep the mind from remembering the past and thinking about the future. We have, whether we admit it or not, a refuge to which we flee. Our nature will not allow us to be houseless. We must hold to a something, whatever it may be, that will overhang and surround our souls as a dwelling and a refuge. In searching after shelter the sinner is willing to flee to any refuge rather than to the refuge set before him in the Gospel. Some sinners rather than come to Christ for refuge will dwell under the cold and dark shadows of infidelity—others take refuge in the general mercy of God—others flee as to their dwelling place to duties and

turn everything they touch into a work, and put the shadow for the substance—others turn as to their strong tower to compounding with Christ; they will do so much in their salvation, and Christ is expected to make up what is lacking. Others flee as to their hiding place, to a faith that is a compound of virtues or of qualifications, or is a hidden principle which manifests itself by virtues and by holy tempers that give the sinner a right to Christ and His salvation.

It is of eternal importance that we come to a clear response to the Gospel exhibition of Christ, and as there are many ways of answering the Gospel proposed and followed by sinners to their everlasting ruin, let me at the outset in this letter seek to clear the way for a positive statement of the good old path followed by the people of God in every age.

Some when they listen to the Gospel exhibition of Christ hasten to duties, to hear God's word, or to prayer and meditation, and suppose that they meet the Gospel exhibition of Christ with the proper response, or are preparing themselves for Christ; come to Christ with these duties as satisfying to God, or as the grounds of your acceptance before God, or as the grounds on which you claim an interest in Christ and you are undone. The error I condemn is one of the gross errors of Popery. Perhaps you say you do not *trust* to your duties to save you, or *rest* on them as so many claims which may be urged upon God to give you an interest in Christ. Well, you surrender them in the gross Popish sense, but yet you want to cling to them as so many motives to

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give you Christ, or as so many motives to lead Christ to give you an interest in himself, or as those things that will produce faith in you, or as those things that will qualify you for being saved by Christ. The course you pursue is equally ruinous to the soul. It is a delusion, it is a lie.

I do not object to duties but I do most seriously object to the use you make of them. We must give up our duties not in the point of pursuance of them, we must observe them alway, but we must give them up in the point of dependence upon them in any and every form. This is very hard to do. It is the hardest of all that meets the sinner to give up his works and his righteousness, and have no hope of even the slightest favour of God for them. I suppose it is because it is such a difficult yet necessary work, if at last we should reach the heavenly world, that it is so frequently urged upon us in the Scriptures and occupies such an important place in the subordinate standards of the Protestant churches. We are assured by the word of God that all our works or attendance upon duties performed while in an unregenerate state, or before we have settled the quarrel that is between us and God by receiving Christ as he is offered in the Gospel, are sins. If the fruit would be good, the tree must be good. An apostle calls all these works "dead works." They are the works of a dead soul and tend to eternal death. The sinner and all his doings, I care not what these doings are, while he stands apart from Christ are damnable.

The light of nature and the legal tendencies of our

nature, lead us away to these duties, and lead us to rest in them as in some way meritoriously connected with salvation. Now, there is no easier way devised for sinners to pursue and at last to reach everlasting death, than the way of duties. When Christ is lifted up in the preaching of the word, as He is presented in the Gospel, we must beware lest works step in to arrest the response we should give. A low estimate of our utter corruption and absolute helplessness in the things of salvation, leads us astray in our estimate of the works of unregenerate sinners. Ungodly men do not like to be brought fairly to the point when they are called *instantly, on the spot*, to believe on Christ for their own salvation; but they are quite ready to listen to and approve of earnest pleadings to go home and read the word of God, and pray and attend to duties, and will not object much to the creed that leads them to believe that at some future time these duties will end in the production of faith. These views abound where religion is only a mere name, they please unconcerned souls as they put off immediate compliance with the Gospel call, they lead them to works and to suppose that they have something to do in order to gain salvation, and they flatter their pride as they proceed upon the supposition that though they are so corrupt and helpless that they can not believe, yet that they are not so corrupt and helpless that they can not read and pray and attend to duties. The true position is, that the sinner is thoroughly corrupt and helpless in *all*, and to lead him to suppose that he can pray or perform any duty in an acceptable way to God while in un-

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belief, is to lead him to rest in a lie and a snare.

You have been blessed with pious parents who have instructed you in the way of salvation, you have been diligent in the outward observance of all the means of grace; you have lived until the present hour a life that is *outwardly* in harmony with the religion you profess, and now you find it difficult to believe that your past life is of no avail in your salvation—that you have to cast all from you as sins, and come down to the position of the polluted harlot or the profane publican, and receive salvation on the same terms. Such, however, is the way of mercy. The Gospel places sinners of every rank on a common ground—it regards them all as justly exposed to death and as absolutely helpless in their ruin; it unfolds the story of salvation by Christ; it proclaims the Father's love as illustrated in that way of grace, and it utters His call to sinners *immediately* to receive Christ as he is offered, with the assurance that any sinner who accepts the tendered gift shall obtain pardon, purity, and eternal life—not by doing, but by receiving, for salvation is all the doing of Christ, and it is all done.

Some suppose that when they listen to the Gospel exhibition of Christ, that they are called upon to look *inward* and search for marks of the Spirit's work in regenerating them, and in giving them that faith by which they may receive and rest on Christ, and in doing this they conclude that they are engaged in their proper work, and are assuredly giving a right response to the Gospel.

Let me dwell on these things for a little, so that I may show you how thoroughly wrong the poor sinner is who follows this way, when called upon to meet with a true response the exhibition that is given us of Christ in the Gospel. I wish to call your attention to them in the most formal manner, as I fear your state of mind may be traced to your wrong views about regeneration and faith. I so judge because you say "I do not find the Spirit's influence on my heart, and am therefore overwhelmed and in great perplexity, nearly as much so as if there was no Gospel salvation offered to me. You know, you have time after time reminded me of the Spirit's work, and specially of the necessity of being born again. If I could be satisfied that I am a subject of the Spirit's saving operations, and have passed from death unto life, I would receive and rest upon Christ as he is offered in the Gospel, and would be glad."

It is most true that you must be born again, and that that new birth is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit. In this new birth the soul is acted upon, it does not act. The soul has no agency in its own regeneration, and your duty is to leave it with perfect confidence in the hands of the Spirit. Leave that work that is entirely his entirely with him. He will not neglect his own work. To doubt this is to dishonour him. Leave it with him, reckon confidently on him, and attend directly to that to which he calls you,—to accept of Christ as the Father's gift to you as a lost sinner. In this acceptance of Christ your agency is required, is concerned, is indispensable. You may

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say that you are "overwhelmed and in perplexity." Let me assure you, you will never obtain relief as long as you trouble yourself about that which is the Spirit's work alone, and in which your agency is neither needed nor allowed, and neglect that which you are commanded to do.

Those who are born again have been begotten by the truth—specially the truth for which I plead. The Spirit, when He comes to regenerate the sinner, deals with him as a moral and intelligent being. He works upon the soul by the truth. The whole work of regeneration, from its commencement to its end in the entire sanctification of the soul, is begun and carried on under the Spirit by a sight and sense of the grace that reigns in the Gospel. Now, there is no true evidence of regeneration but by the belief of the Gospel. From this you may see that your views of regeneration invert the order that is in salvation. You look for the *effect* of the Gospel before you will receive the Gospel. Your course is as reasonable as that of the patient who will not accept of the required medicine until he feels that he is cured, or the husbandman who will not cultivate his fields until he sees them producing an abundant harvest.

You suppose that if you had passed from death to life you would receive Christ. I fear you think your right to receive Christ and his salvation rests upon your regeneration. If so, you are putting the work of the Spirit *within* you, in the place of the work of Christ *without* you. Your right to receive Christ and his salvation does not rest on your regeneration, or any work of the Spirit within you, or any

fruit of the Spirit's work in the soul ; it rests alone in the offer, the tender or gift which the father makes of His Son, and his salvation to sinners without distinction and exception in the Gospel.

Sinners think that they are very humble and altogether free from legal tendencies when their mind is taken up about their regeneration and their feelings as they listen to the offers of the Gospel. If satisfied about these things, they would accept Christ and rejoice in him. It is right that they should know that while thus engaged, led on by pride and a strong legal nature, they are seeking to overturn the absolute freeness of the Gospel, and establish a righteousness of their own. They would like to bring something in them that may give them a right to Christ, and will take their regeneration or their feelings produced by the Spirit, rather than accept of Christ as a gift—as freely offered in the Gospel.

"You tell me that God the Father holds out in offer or tender His Son, and eternal life in Him to every sinner, as a sinner, who hears the Gospel ; and that this offer or tender or grant of Christ affords a warrant to all to receive him. Now, I have tried to receive him—to trust in him, and I cannot—I am not able to believe ; I am anxious to believe in him, and would believe in him if I could. Faith is the gift of God, and he has not given it to me. I must wait till He, in His sovereignty, bestows it." I have said that I fear your state of mind may be traced to your views of regeneration and faith. I have given you some thoughts about regeneration, so as to lead you away from it as the warrant of your faith, and

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lead you to leave it in the hands of the Holy Spirit, and to attend to the duty to which you are called. I judge you are also wrong in your views of faith, and refer you to the extract of your letter which I have quoted. I wish to make a remark or two on what you say about faith.

1. Your mind has fixed itself upon faith or the act of coming to Christ. This is wrong. Instead of looking *inward* upon faith or how you are to perform faith aright—you should and you must look *outward* to Christ the great object of faith. Faith without its object is nothing. Christ says, "Come unto Me." Fix your whole soul upon the word *ME* rather than the word *come*. Take your stand upon the *free welcome*.

2. You make faith a work and subvert the Gospel as it proposes a free salvation. You look into your mind anxiously for faith. You have come to the conclusion that God has not given it to you. If you found that you had faith you would receive Christ. Your faith is then a condition whether you will receive Christ or not. If you cannot bring prayers and tears you do not want to come to him with absolutely nothing, you will bring your faith. If this is not lifting faith to the position of a work, I do not know what it is. The frame of spirit is a legal one, and leads you to perform a certain act in order to peace, or to examine whether you have performed it aright, in order to have peace from the consideration that you have performed faith and performed it aright. I need scarcely say that this is in direct opposition to the immediate freeness of Divine grace. Faith can

give you no right to Christ, to the promises or to what the promises contain, it simply lays hold upon them. Your right lies in the offer or tender of the Gospel. You must look away from self to Christ as offered in the Gospel. I want you to turn from the work of examining your own feelings to the object of faith, for He is our peace, not our faith.

3. You say "faith is the gift of God, and that He has not given it to you, and that you cannot believe." My reply I give you in the language of an old author, "Faith is undoubtedly the gift of God, but the power to believe and trust does not lie where such as you generally think it does, namely, *in a certain active energy in the mind, but it lies in the fulness and clearness of the evidence of the truth and a capacity to receive it.*" "Faith cometh by nearing and hearing by the word of God." Let me implore you to present to your mind a plain downright statement of the Gospel. It may be the Holy Spirit will work faith thereby as he did in the first fruits of the Gentiles. If you knew that Christ was offered, tendered or given to you in the Gospel, you could believe. The great office of the Spirit is to make known to particular sinners that Christ is given to them. "The Spirit does not reveal to us our title to the things of God, by showing us in the first place, our election, but by enlightening us spiritually to discern the things that are freely given to us as sinners and our title in the freeness of the gift; so that the grace of God stands in the Gospel free for any; but the enlightening of the Spirit to discern this free grace is particular to the elect." It is the Holy

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Spirit alone who makes known to particular sinners that Christ is given, or tendered, or offered to them, and enables them to appropriate Him as given in the Gospel. The sinner who thus appropriates Christ can never be found believing a lie. The Holy Spirit is thoroughly acquainted with the extent of the atonement, and he operates in this special manner upon them alone who will find it in all its blessed fulness to be true to them. You think if you could believe you would know that Christ is offered, tendered or given to you in the Gospel. Do not labour to invert the ways of God. It is because you do not know that Christ is so given in the Gospel and because you regard God as a liar, and believe that you dare not simply believe on Christ, that you cannot believe on him. Your legal tendencies keep you from accepting a free salvation.

4. "I must wait till God in His sovereignty bestow faith." The term "wait" is frequently employed in the word of God to denote faith. It is employed to denote faith of a very high order—the faith that clings to God in spite of darkness and doubt. You, of course, do not use it in the sense in which it is employed in the Scriptures, for you confess that you have no faith. It is for faith you wait. Now you have it not. I suppose you use it to indicate that you, in the meantime, delay the question of settling the quarrel between you and God, and that you will watch the turn of events—if God bestows faith upon you it will be well; if he does not bestow it, you have a secret feeling that God's sovereignty is in some way to blame. In the meantime you *wait*—you *delay*.

I am exceedingly distressed to think that you could calmly frame the sentence which I have marked as the fourth particular, and to which I have given the only meaning which, in my judgment, can be given to it. My dear friend, to follow the course which you now propose, is, as far as human eye can see, to reach Hell with all its woe. If you adhere to your resolution, you are lost forevermore. You delay the settlement of the quarrel between you and God at the peril of his infinite displeasure and your eternal well-being. No delay is allowed here. It must be so for various reasons.

First.—Because faith is demanded of the sinner as his *duty*. This duty springs out of the intrinsic excellence of God. God is an infinitely glorious God. He is possessed of every excellence that is fitted to call forth the confidence and love of his intelligent and moral creatures. Now, on the ground of his moral beauty—his own worthiness—he claims the confidence of all his creatures, whether they are on earth, in Heaven, or in Hell. No change in the creature can abrogate these claims. The creature can not get rid of them if he would; they hold him in time, and they will hold him throughout eternity. Dare you delay in yielding to God that which he claims on the ground of his infinite excellency?

Second.—The duty of faith arises, also, out of the relation in which we stand to God. We are his creatures, his moral creatures, and we are absolutely dependent upon him. Because of this relation in which we stand to him, we are unable, even if we

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would, to rid ourselves of the moral element which springs out of this relationship, and binds us to act according to it. This may be termed the law of creation, and is from its very nature as unalterable as the perfections of Jehovah. To claim a right to delay in recognizing the claims which God has upon us, arising out of the relation in which we stand to Him, is just to claim independence of God. Dare you delay in yielding to him that confidence which he demands on the ground of the relation in which you stand to Him?

Third.—The duty of faith springs out of the *positive command* to believe on the name of his Son, Jesus Christ. The Scriptures abound with commands to this purpose, "And this is his commandment, that ye should believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ." The duty of which we speak rests upon moral grounds; but in addition to the moral element it is positively commanded, and is as binding on us as any command in the decalogue. Indeed, it is contained in the first commandment of the law,—*"Thou shalt have no other Gods before me."* He who does not believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, according to the Divine commandment, has another God than the God of Israel before him. Dare you delay in yielding obedience to the positive command of Jehovah, and still dwell in the regions of the idolater?

Fourth.—The duty of faith springs out of the *nature and design* of the Gospel. The Gospel contains a discovery of God's mercy and love regarding our fallen world. It designs the salvation of sinners

to the glory of the Godhead—or the glory of the Godhead in the salvation of sinners. Now, the mere presentation of such a scheme in the report of the Gospel, lays the sinner under high obligations to receive it. To believe or not to believe does not rest in the region of pure indifference. Dare you, even for a moment, cast dishonour upon God, and court your own destruction by rejecting the Gospel?

Fifth.—There is no delay allowed in believing upon the name of Christ, because of the *consequences* that follow delay. There is nothing that can either *excuse* or *justify any sinner* in delaying to accept of Christ as offered in the Gospel.

Look at the whole truth fully in the face, and I put it to you to say, if you dare, to seek to justify yourself in resisting the claims that God has upon you, arising out of his own worthiness, and out of the relation in which you stand to Him; and if you can excuse yourself in defiantly disobeying and disregarding His direct command; and if you have anything to offer to justify your crime as you do what in you lies to dishonour the Godhead and screen your own ruin? Be assured that there is nothing that can excuse you in waiting in a position that is inseparably joined to such a deep, atrocious crime as that of making God a liar; and of declaring that He has perjured himself. Be assured that no sober mind can justify itself in waiting under a sentence of condemnation, or excuse itself in delaying while the wrath of God abides upon it, or can be content while at any moment it may be chased out of the world and cast into all the misery of Hell. Be assured

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that your inability is no excuse, that it results from your sin and is your crime, that you are so thoroughly depraved and so much in love with your sin, and opposed to Christ, that though your eternity depends upon your coming to Him, it appears you cannot be prevailed to come, that you might have life without money and without price, that when at last waiting, delaying sinners are brought to stand before Christ in judgment, their real ground for delay will appear to be that they were too proud to accept an absolutely free salvation, too much in love with sin to receive Christ as a Saviour, and too much opposed to each person of the God-head to yield obedience to the Gospel. Be assured I dare not tell you to wait. If I did so, I would tell you of another Gospel than that that is revealed in the Scriptures. That man in his want of spiritual life and spiritual light, is ready to say concerning troubled souls, "send them away, that they may buy," but the voice of the Gospel is, they need not depart; give ye them to eat"—that Christ is offered, or tendered, or given to you here, and now, as the free gift of the Father, and that you are here, and now, on the spot, invited, entreated and commanded to believe on Him, that every barrier that stood in the way of your return to God is absolutely removed by Christ, and that you may have everlasting life here and now, and that if you live another moment without Christ and His salvation, the fault is all your own.

My Dear Friend, look the whole truth about Christ in the face, and see the consequences that must follow waiting to settle the quarrel between

you and your Maker. I can tell you only of a *present* Saviour and a *present* salvation. They are now, at this moment, yours in offer. Wait not, delay not, lest Christ should say of you, "ye would not come to Me that ye might have life," "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone." I know that sinners are sorely grieved at the immediate freeness of the Gospel. A fettered, circuitous, conditional Gospel is sought after and loved. It flatters pride and does not trouble the soul. They do not like to be brought, stripped of all their fancied good things, and standing alone in their guilt and deformity as sinners, face to face with Christ alone and to receive Him as given by the Father, immediately and freely by faith alone. To this position you must come if you would be saved.

My great desire is to lead you to the right way of believing, to lead you to see that you and Christ must come together. Christ *alone* and you *alone*, without your works, and duties, and feelings, to receive Christ by a naked faith—by nothing but faith. This is the ground taken by Christ and His apostles, and vindicated by our early Reformers and the compilers of our subordinate standards. Their united testimony is to this effect, that in salvation we receive Christ *alone*, and that we receive Him by *faith alone*, and that we receive Him "*as He is offered in the Gospel.*" He is offered to sinners only as a present Saviour. Why then wait when His call is "Come *now*, and let us reason together?"

You see, I have lingered long that I might clear the way for a positive statement of the good old

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path followed by the people of God in every age. I trust I have not lingered in vain. We need light to lead the soul to apply to itself the Gospel. There is a surprising darkness on the whole subject, however clear may be our theoretical knowledge, when we come to apply salvation to our own case. Perhaps there is no clearer proof of the necessity of the Spirit's work to show us the grace that reigns in salvation, than the strong legal tendencies that are ever appearing in us, and are ever leading us to pervert or to mistake that grace, and in many ways to place our duties, or the work of the Spirit, or the fruits of his work between our souls and Christ as He is freely offered to us in the Gospel.

Faith in Jesus Christ is well described in our subordinate standards, thus:—

“Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone, for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel.” That faith which unites the soul to Christ is called a *grace*. It is called a *grace* because it is a gift of God bestowed upon the sinner, not because of any good thing in him but because it seemed good in the sight of the Giver.

That faith is called a *saving* grace, not because there is anything saving in it, it is nothing apart from its object, but because in the plan of human salvation there is an inseparable connection between union to Christ on the part of the sinner by faith and salvation. The sinner is saved on the instant in which he comes to the first act of faith. That faith is called a faith in *Jesus Christ*. You see it is faith

in a person, not in a creed, or doctrine, or a life, but in a person. God is presented to us in Christ, in a form that our thoughts can conceive of, and our hearts flow out unto, just as we think or feel about a friend who is out of sight—afar off—as we sit down to write our thoughts to him, until it seems almost speaking to him face to face. Faith lays hold upon a person and leads the soul into communion with Him—a communion that is as real in fact and in experience, as the communion that friend has with friend, as they enjoy the same privileges, sit down at the same banquet or partake of the same meal.

Now, how is it that faith in Jesus Christ does these things? The answer given is that it “receives and rests on him alone for salvation as he is offered in the Gospel.” This faith receives and rests on Christ in a particular way. It does so only *as* he is offered. It will not do to receive and rest on Christ in any way we choose; we must receive Him in one way—in one way only—we must see the terms on which He is offered, and receive and rest upon Him *as* he is offered. You may see from this, that it is of the greatest importance for us sinners to know in what manner Christ is offered to us in the Gospel. If we do not receive Christ *as* he is offered, but in some other way, we may be charged with the crime of going about to establish a righteousness of our own. Faith is the soul’s echo to the offers of the Gospel. *How* is Christ offered? You wish to receive Him *as* He is offered, and anxiously enquire—*How* is He offered? I answer by refer-

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ring you to my second letter, in which you will find it stated and illustrated at length that God in the Gospel gives, offers, tenders His Son, and eternal life in Him to every sinner, as a sinner, who hears the Gospel, and that this grant, or offer, or tender of Christ and salvation in Him, affords a warrant to all who hear it to receive Him. This gift, or offer, or tender on the part of God, is complete in itself—gives a complete warrant to the sinner to accept of Christ on the instant, no matter what he has been, and no-matter what he is. Faith in Jesus Christ is described as a *receiving* of Him *as* he is offered. Jno. 1: 12.—“But as many as *received Him* to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” The Spirit in this passage speaks of *believing* as synonymous with *receiving*. Faith receives its denomination from the peculiar aspect in which Christ is presented to us. It is here called a *receiving* of Christ because of two things—

First. Christ is presented as *given* by the Father. Giving and receiving answer to each other. Receiving is the response, the echo of the recipient to the action of the benefactor in giving. The giving is previous to the receiving. The receiving proceeds upon the giving. Christ is given by the Father to sinners without distinction and exception, that is, the Father offers or tenders His Son to them, and they have in the offer or tender a right to receive the gift. When the gift is received on the ground of the tender alone, the sinner becomes a real partaker of-it and instantly is in possession of eternal life.

You know with what pleasurable satisfaction you receive and welcome a long absent friend to your home. In the Gospel a long absent friend of yours is represented as passing by. He turns aside to your dwelling. He stands and knocks seeking admittance. He desires to bestow upon you riches greater far than the east or the west can unfold. Receive Him as the blessed of the Lord—as a long absent friend, and you will joy for ever more.

Second. Because faith does not bring anything to God, or offer anything to Him; but it takes home to the sinner, as a sinner, guilty, polluted, condemned, deserving Hell with all its woe—Christ, and in Him eternal life only on the ground of the Gospel grant. Faith is the greatest beggar in the world. It brings nothing to God; it will even offer nothing to Him for Christ and salvation, but receives all—a whole Christ and in Him a whole salvation as a gift from God, as a gift alone. It does not seek to make salvation, or to promise it by way of works or merit, or to prepare the soul for it—the gift or offer or tender is made, and it just receives it as it is given.

You should hear the Gospel speaking as to you. The Gospel is not a story of what Jesus *once* said, so much as it is what Jesus *now* speaking to you. Listen to it as to him who is speaking to you from Heaven, and he offers to you, as you are, and at the present moment, salvation—receive it on the ground of His offer, on that ground alone, and you are safe for time and eternity. Some may suppose that they are fools who receive Christ and in him eternal life, on the ground of the Gospel grant alone, and who

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are satisfied that by so doing they shall never be confounded. If such are fools, I freely confess it to be my highest ambition to stand among them and to greet them as my friends, my brethren, and my companions, with whom I love to dwell.

Christ presents himself under the figure of "*bread*," John 6 : 48—"I am that bread of life." John 6 : 51—"I am the living bread which came down from Heaven : if *any* man eat of this bread, he shall live forever." He declares His flesh and blood are meat and drink. John 6 : 54—"Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life."

He presents Himself under the figure of living water, John 7 : 37-38—"If *any* man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Rev. 22 : 17—"Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life." As faith receives its denomination from the aspects under which Christ is presented, it is called in the passages we have quoted *eating* and *drinking*.

The Father hath, in these last days, spoken to us by His Son from Heaven—and by His Son He now speaks unto us. What does the Father declare as He speaks unto us by the Son? He declares that *any man* may eat of the bread of life which he has sent down from Heaven for the life of the world ; that *whoso* chooses may eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, and have eternal life ; that *any man*, or *whosoever* is willing, may drink of the waters of life freely—they will cost him nothing—conditions prescribed or required. If these declarations of the Father speaking through the Son, do not intimate that Christ and His salvation are offered

to you, to me, to each sinner who hears the Gospel whatever his case may be, and if they do not give us a right to take Christ and His salvation as offered to us, I am at a thorough loss to say what meaning they can bear. It is as if many men of every class among men, and of every nation, were assembled together in one large pavilion; the beasts are killed, the wine mingled, and the table furnished; the master comes in and addressing the company says: "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled, *any man* may do so, *whosoever* is willing to partake of my bounty may do so—may drink till satisfied, it will cost him nothing." I put it to you to say if each individual of that company, if he believed the master was a truthful, honest, and sincere man in his statements, would not feel that the provision made was in his offer, and that he had a right to appropriate it to his immediate use, and that his right lay only in the offer. If you would so think and act with man, why do you not act in the same manner with God? Look the truth fairly in the face and you will be forced to confess that you look upon God as a liar, as dishonest and insincere.

Now, faith in opposition to such a course, believes all that God declares, and, taking Him at His word, partakes of His provision. When we eat or drink what is set before us, we take it to ourselves for our bodily nourishment. So in believing, we make an application of Christ and His salvation to ourselves in particular. We can not be nourished by our food unless we partake of it, so we can have no saving benefit by Christ unless we take Him to ourselves.

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We have no right in ourselves to this spiritual provision. But it is offered to sinners, to every man, to whosoever will, and surely you, and I, and sinners of any class who hear the Gospel, are included in this tender of salvation—as included in it we may say in a blessed sense, it is ours—ours in offer, and partaking of it on this ground rest satisfied that it will be relished in all its fulness.

You must take home the grant of Christ in the Gospel to yourself. Be in earnest about it. See how urgent God is to lead you to this self-application of Christ to your soul. He invites you to come to it—He entreats you to come to it—He commands you to come to it—He promises you a welcome and a full salvation when you come to it. He has recorded His promise in the volume of the Book, so that you may be assured of His sincerity and faithfulness, and be constrained to come to it. He has set His seal to His promise to convince you that He cannot go back, but that He will be true according to your faith when you come to it. He has sworn by Himself that all is true, so that you may be led to appropriate to yourself the free Gospel grant of Christ and His salvation, and escape the doom of those who will not trust Him even on His oath. He has given the highest pledge of His friendship and love that *even He* could give, when he spared not His own Son but delivered Him up to obedience, sufferings and death, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. He assures us that bullocks from a thousand stalls, and flocks from a thousand hills, in one great offering are not so pleasing to Him

as the belief of this grant. That He rejoices in the presence of the angels, and that the angels before Him, when it is known, rejoice that any sinner has appropriated to himself Christ in the grant of the Gospel. With what condescension and loving-kindness does God seek to meet the case of every sinner who would come to Him. He adapts Himself to the sinner who has a lofty faith and leads him onward, and turns to the sinner of the lowest faith and assures him it will not be rejected. Thus He meets you and cries "Flee from the wrath to come," as one whose faith enables you to hasten swiftly and vigorously to Christ. If you reply, I have not that swiftness and vigour of faith, then He says "Come to Me," it may be as a blind man groping your way, or as a poor, diseased cripple and that will satisfy, for "the bruised reed he shall not break, and the smoking flax he shall not quench." If you reply, "I am unable to come to Christ even as the blind or as the lame—I can not move"—says Christ "Stretch forth thine hand," and receive thy Saviour, He is nigh to thee and that will satisfy. If you reply "I can not stretch forth my hand, I am powerless," then says Christ "Look unto Me," give but one eager, longing look, and that will satisfy. If you reply "I can not look, I am blind," then says Christ, "Submit to the righteousness of God." Lie still as you are, and allow the mantle of His righteousness to be cast over you, and that will be taken for faith. The man on the lofty pinnacle may see his dangerous position, and that another move may cast him down from the giddy height to lie at its base a crushed and quivering corpse. In

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his position of danger, a friend, in pleading tones, cries to him, "Lie still, do not move, and I will save you." He believes his friend, and obeys him, and is saved. So is faith in Christ. Trust Him—trust Him once, and you are safe for evermore. My dear friend, I must now close what has been to me a delightful task. I trust it has been profitable to you. Let me urge you to study fully the great truths which I have endeavoured to bring before you. They are old truths, and presented by me, perhaps to a considerable extent, in an old dress. Seek to know their power. Do not be turned from them to anything that would point to delay in settling the quarrel between you and your Maker, or would point to qualifications or preparations for Christ, though it may be urged by those who are recognised as great and good; cast it from you, it is from beneath, and is a mockery and a lie.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and *thou* shalt be saved.

I am, my very dear friend,

Yours truly.



